

Message Text

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13-12

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-05 OMB-01 ACDA-05

OPR-02 SY-05 A-01 OC-05 CCO-00 EB-07 CU-02 SCS-03

SCA-01 /107 W

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O 041030Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8550

INFO ZMEMBASSY NEW DELHI IMMEDIATE 4930

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 5329

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, BG

SUBJECT: TROUBLE IN BANGLADESH

REF: DACCA 5313

1. IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE FORCED DEPARTURE FROM
BANGLADESH LAST NIGHT OF THE KEY PARTICIPANTS IN THE
AUGUST 15 COUP, THE PROSPECT OF VIOLENCE IN THIS CURRENT
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CRISIS

SEEMS TO HAVE ABATED, AT LEAST FOR THE TIME BEING. THAT THE CRISIS ATMOSPHERE CONTINUES IS PERHAPS BEST REVEALED BY THE FACTS THAT THE AIRPORT WAS STILL CLOSED AS OF 1600 AND THAT INTERNATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATION LINKS REMAIN SEVERED. NEVERTHELESS, ROAD BLOCKS ARE BEING DISMANTLED, GOVERNMENT OFFICES ARE FUNCTIONING, SHOPS ARE OPEN, AND VEHICULAR TRAFFIC IS MOVING ON. LIGHT OF REDUCED TENSION, WE HAVE RESUMED NORMAL ACTIVITY AND ARE INFORMING THE AMERICAN COMMUNITY THAT THERE NO LONGER SEEMS REASON TO APPREHEND DANGER.

2. INsofar AS WE CAN DETERMINE, FEW BANGALEEX ARE AWARE OF THE GRAVITY OF THE CRISIS WHICH THEIR NATION CONFRONTED YESTERDAY. THERE WAS, FOR A FEW HOURS, THE LIVE DANGER OF MAJOR HOSTILITIES BETWEEN THE CONTENDING FORCES. THE SENSE OF SOMETHING BEING VERY MUCH AMISS WAS UNMISTAKABLE, BUT WE SUSPECT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE THERE IS ANY GENERAL APPRECIATION OF JUST HOW DANGEROUS THE SITUATION HAD BECOME OR HOW FRAGILE SETTLEMENT STILL IS.

3. THERE ARE FEW SIGNS AS OF THIS MOMENT AS TO NEXT STEPS. THERE APPEARS TO BE A RELATIVELY BROAD CONSENSUS THAT THE MILITARY WILL PLAY AN EVEN LARGER ROLE THAN IN THE POST-AUGUST 15 PERIOD IN GOVERNING BANGLADSSH'S AFFAIRS; A MILITARY COUNCIL IS RUMORED AS LIKELY, ALTHOUGH HOW IT WOULD FUNCTION AND THE EXTENT OF THE FORMAL POWERS IT WOULD HOLD ARE THE SUBJECT OF WIDE-RANGING SPECULATION. WE WAIT TO SEE WHAT POLICY CHANGES WILL FOLLOW, BUT ANTICIPATE THAT GIVEN THE TRAUMA THROUGH WHICH THE COUNTRY PASSED, NO EARLY PRONOUNCEMENTS WILL EMERGE.

4. NEVERTHELESS, CHANGES ARE EXPECTED. AS A POSSIBLE HARBINGER, THE KEY EVENT IN DACCA TODAY WAS A PROCESSION, WHOSE MARCHERS NUMBERED IN THE THOUSANDS, WHICH WENT FROM DACCA UNIVERSITY TO THE LATE SHEIKH MUJIB'S HOUSE ON ROAD 32 IN DHANMONDI WHERE A MEMORIAL MEETING WAS HELD. THE PROCESSION HAD BEEN PLANNED--AND ANNOUNCED--PRIOR TO YESTERDAY'S CRISIS. BUT WHETHER IT WOULD HAVE

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TAKEN PLACE IS UNANSWERABLE. WE KNOW THAT AN ANTI-MUJIB PUBLIC MEETING HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR YESTERDAY, AND IT COULD WELL HAVE OFFERED A PRETEXT FOR BANNING TODAY'S MARCH BUT FOR THE FALL OF THOSE WHO OVERTHREW MUJIB. THE PROCESSION WAS STAGED BY STUDENT GROUPS SPONSORED BY THE AWAMI LEAGUE, NAP/MAZAFFAR AND THE JSD, AND AMONG THE MORE PROMINENT MARCHERS WAS RASHID MOSHARRAF, MP, BROTHER OF BRIGADIER KHALID MOSHARRAF.

BOSTER

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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